

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

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clothes, to distinguish him from a common man, 431
except the peculiar oldness and shabbiness of 622
them; for if he appear in the street with new 626
and handsome apparel, just taken out of his
wife's loom, the first person he meets will boldly
cry, Give me that dress, *Tuch cauf grihilalgi*;
and unless he immediately parts with it, he be-
comes the scoff and the scorn of all, and hears
himself called covetous and niggardly. Some-
times, when they came to ask a great favour of 123
me, they would stroke my shoulder, and say in 431
a sweet tone, You are indeed a captain, Father; 554
by which honourable appellation they wished me
to understand that it was unlike a captain to
refuse a man any thing. As those things which
they asked me for were not always in my
possession, nor could indeed be found in any
shop at Amsterdam, I told them I was no cap-
tain, that they might bear a refusal with good
humour, and attribute it to poverty, not to ill-
nature. But it was all in vain. They construe
a Father's excuse into a falsehood, and exclaim,
not without much laughter on both sides, What
a liar, what a miser you are! I found that those 431
caciques had abundance of followers who were 555
active and successful in the acquirement of 622
booty, free from sordid avarice, and fond of dis-
playing an unbounded liberality towards their
hordesmen. Kaapetraikin and Kebachin had

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756 stored him to health, and gained me the repu-
797 tation of a physician amongst the Abipones.
A Nothing will procure you the good-will of the
savages so soon as skill in the healing art. They
[123] think that he who understands the natures and
remedies of diseases can be ignorant of nothing.
They will believe him in matters of religion,
and be tractable and obedient to him. Our
Saviour himself inspired mortals with wonder,
by healing bodies as well as souls. In imitation
of him, when we were employed in the instruc-
tion of the savages, we endeavoured to supply
the want of physicians, surgeons, and druggists,
by easily obtained remedies, by reading medi-
cal books, and by other means, in order to wean
that miserable people from their jugglers, whom
we accounted the chief obstacles to the propa-
gation of the holy religion.

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758 It is incredible how well the sick are taken
797 care of in the Guarany towns. Indians are ap-
pointed to attend upon them, more or fewer,
according to the number of inhabitants. These
men have some knowledge of herbs and com-
mon remedies, though they are not allowed to
use any medicine without consulting the mis-
sionary. They carry in their hands a staff
marked with a cross, and are hence called cross-
bearers. It is their business to go about dawn
to visit the sick in the district appointed to

797 recovery to tiger's fat, which I prescribed for other persons with equal success. You shall now hear a still more singular fact. That rattle which a certain poisonous serpent has annexed to its tail, is a noble medicine: for when reduced to powder, and placed on hollow teeth, it softens them so that they fall out of themselves without any sense of pain. It is also useful in other complaints:

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797 In order to obtain a knowledge of the nature of diseases, and of medicinal herbs, we diligently studied the books of physicians and herbalists; by which means, as we often were of service to the sick, we wrought so far with the Abipones, that whenever they were seized with any disorder they placed all their hopes on our assistance, to the neglect of their jugglers. When I distrusted myself and felt anxious for the life of my patient, I never rashly prescribed any medicine. To defend him from the injuries of the air, and to prevent him from eating or drinking any thing improper in his situation, was my chief care. I afforded him as much wholesome food as I could, from my own provisions. If these regulations were of no avail, I gave him a medicine that had been tried by long use, and which, if it did no good, could at any rate do no harm. The savages, won by our courtesy and kindness, suffered themselves to be baptized;

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for at first, whenever they fell sick, the dread of baptism induced them to fly to the lurking-¹²³ holes of the woods, or cause others to carry⁷⁴⁷ them there. During the latter years, almost all of them reposed the greatest confidence in us, and entertained the utmost good-will towards us, and if they remembered our having ever cured them with any medicine; desired to have it given to their hordesmen when they fell ill. From one instance you may judge of others. In the northern parts of Paraguay there grows a nut, called *Piñon del Paraguay* by the Spaniards, and by physicians *nux cathartica*, because it causes both vomiting and purging. It ridiculously deceived the first Spaniards who visited Paraguay. Delighted with its sweetness they eagerly ate this fruit, and to the great amusement of all, found what they had taken for food to be a medicine, which attacks the human body with double arms, and expels noxious or superfluous humours by two ways. We gave three or four of these nuts to the Abipones, for whom we thought purging necessary, and they all received great benefit from the use¹²³ of them. Hence, whenever they felt any¹⁷⁷ weight on their stomachs, they asked us for this medicine of their own accord. The same⁷⁴⁷ was the case with regard to other remedies. The old women, who obstinately adhered to

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123 former customs, raved when they found their
797 medicines laughed at, and the fountain of their
177 gains dried up. The jugglers, who had sucked
the bodies, and drained the property of the
sick, were despised by their countrymen as a
set of worthless drones.

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753 The Patagonians, and other southern savages,
756 think the body of a sick person to be possessed

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[534] of an evil demon. Their physicians carry about
drums, with horrible forms depicted on them,
which they strike by the sick man's bed, either
to consult the demon concerning the nature of
the disease, or to drive it from the body of their
patient. If any one dies of a disease, the rela-
tions persecute the physician most terribly, as
the author of his death. If a Cacique dies, they

[766] put all the physicians to death, that they may
not fly elsewhere. Actuated by an irrational

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[763] kind of pity, they bury the dying before they
expire. Father Strobl pulled one man alive
from the grave. The Guaycurús call their phy-
sicians Nigienigis. A gourd filled with hard

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756 seeds, and a fan of dusky emu feathers are their
chief insignia, and medical instruments, which
they always carry in their hands that they may

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756 be known. I must not omit to speak of the phy-
sicians of the Chiquitos. A juggler physician,
when he goes to visit the sick, fills his belly
with the most exquisite dainties, chickens, hens;